

Vermont Climate Action Plan

OVERVIEW



Climate Change, Vermont and You

Climate change is here with hotter days and more intense storms across Vermont threatening our health, communities, farms, forests and waterways. Extreme heat and severe storms interrupt work, school and life, put people in harm's way and burden budgets. If action isn't taken soon to significantly cut climate pollution by taking steps such as reducing fossil fuel use, we'll face even bigger risks. While climate change and an energy transition affects everyone, some people are impacted more due to where they live, or their race, ethnicity, income, disability, health, age and occupation. We need a plan that tackles the problem while addressing their needs.



The Vermont Climate Action Plan

The Vermont Climate Action Plan will guide efforts across the state to cut carbon pollution and prepare for a changing climate. The task ahead is not easy. Yet by working together, we can advance solutions that create new job and business opportunities and resilient communities while ensuring those who face the greatest risk from climate change and an energy transition are considered in the priorities set.

The State of Vermont is also developing a Comprehensive Energy Plan, which is specifically focused on energy challenges and opportunities in Vermont. The Comprehensive Energy Plan will inform the Climate Action Plan and provide guidance on the state's energy policy direction.

How is it connected to the Global Warming Solution Act?

We need to cut climate pollution in half by 2030 to meet the target in Vermont's Global Warming Solutions Act. This means moving away from fossil fuels and switching to clean, efficient energy in our transportation systems, buildings, businesses and communities. We also need to prepare for and reduce the impacts of a changing climate so that Vermont is resilient and thrives into the future. The Global Warming Solutions Act mandates adoption of an initial Vermont Climate Action Plan by December 1, 2021 to guide this work and creates a long-standing process for continuing it.

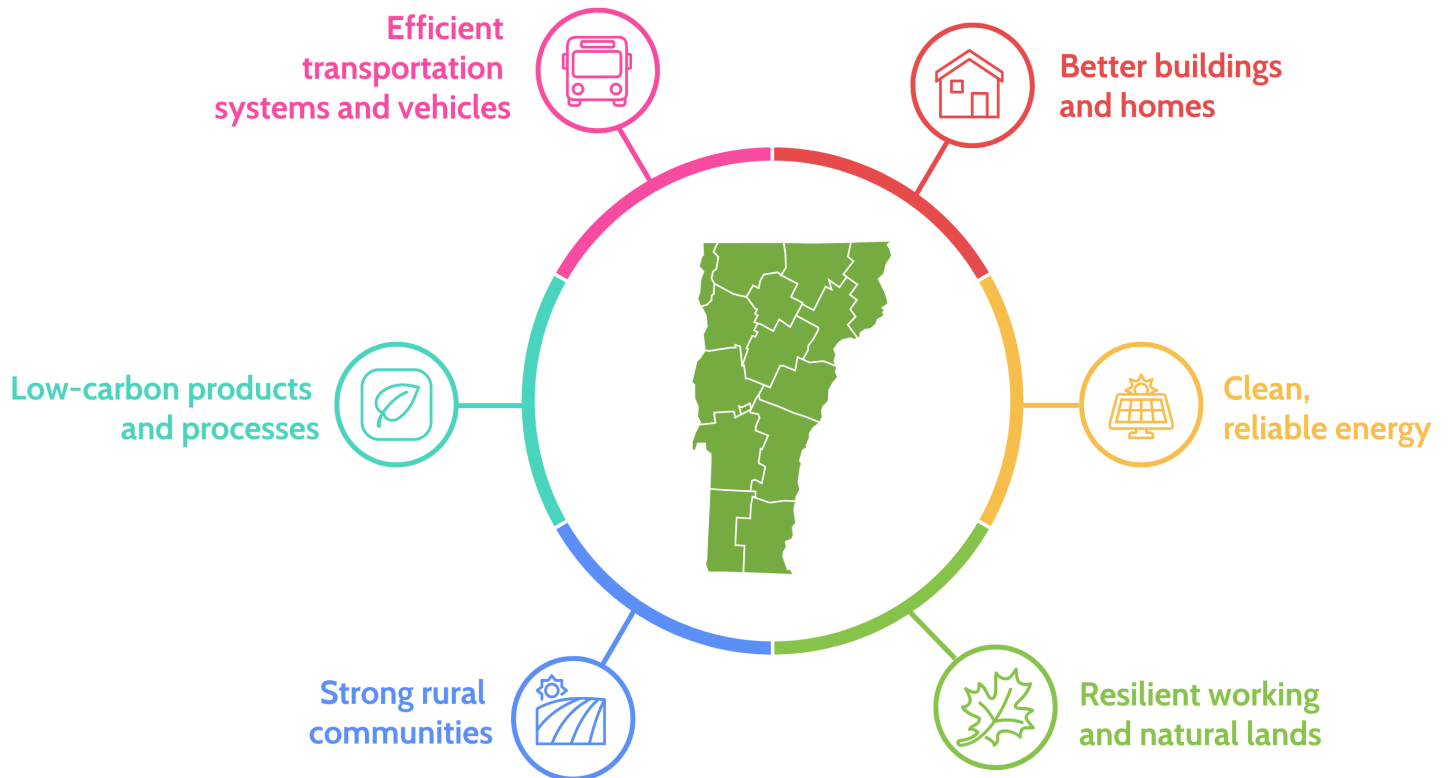
The Act calls for the following with a specific emphasis on reducing negative impacts on communities that are the most impacted by climate change:

- ➔ Emissions cuts from the transportation, building, utility, industrial, commercial and agriculture sectors to cut emissions
- ➔ Reducing energy burdens for rural and marginalized communities
- ➔ Encouraging smart growth
- ➔ Limiting the use of products and chemicals that contribute to climate change
- ➔ Promoting adaptation and resilience to climate impacts on natural working lands
- ➔ Building and encouraging climate resilience of Vermont communities and natural systems

Who is leading the effort?

The Vermont Climate Council was set up by the Vermont Legislature to draft the Climate Action Plan, working through five sub-committees: Rural Resilience and Adaptation, Agriculture and Ecosystems, Cross Sector Mitigation, Just Transitions and Science and Data. Each subcommittee has reviewed existing programs to meet the requirements of the Act and is identifying and evaluating new strategies needed. The Vermont Agency of Natural Resources is supporting the work of the Climate Council and gathering input from Vermonters to help prioritize climate action pathways.

What's being considered?



This is exciting! How can I get involved?

- Learn more about the Vermont Climate Action Plan <https://climatechange.vermont.gov>
- Learn more about the Vermont Comprehensive Energy plan https://publicservice.vermont.gov/publications-resources/publications/energy_plan
- Contact us to learn more about opportunities to partner with us ANR. VermontClimateCouncil@vermont.gov
- Join the conversation on social media <https://www.facebook.com/VTANR>

Vermont Climate Action Plan

WHAT'S AT STAKE AND WHAT CAN BE DONE

From flooding to heat waves, we are already facing the impacts of a changing climate. More extreme weather events disrupt lives, place people, communities, farms, forests and waterways at risk and come at great financial cost. As Vermonters, we know how to come together to face big challenges. We also know that our health, our economy, and our environment are all connected. The State of Vermont is developing a Climate Action Plan to make sure that all of our communities can overcome the challenges of a changing climate and thrive into the future. The State is also developing a Comprehensive Energy Plan focusing on sectors that contribute to our climate emissions. Each plan will inform the other.

The Vermont Climate Action Plan aims to dramatically reduce harmful climate pollution and to prepare Vermont for a warming climate that threatens our communities, livelihoods and landscapes. While not an easy task, addressing climate change presents opportunities for new industries and jobs in clean energy and other low carbon solutions and in preparing our communities for storms and heat waves. Climate change affects everyone, but some more than others due to race, ethnicity, income, health, disability, age and /or occupation. Advancing solutions that address the needs of Vermonters facing the greatest risk is key for a resilient and equitable Vermont.



LEARN MORE:

About the goals of the Global Warming Solutions Act

(<https://aoa.vermont.gov/sites/aoa/files/Boards/VCC/ACT153%20As%20Enacted.pdf>)

About the work of the Vermont Climate Council

(<https://aoa.vermont.gov/content/vermont-climate-council>),

About the Vermont Comprehensive Energy Plan

(https://publicservice.vermont.gov/publications-resources/publications/energy_plan)



How much of a risk does climate change pose for Vermont?

The last decade was the warmest on record. The impacts are already being felt from more high heat days to increasingly severe storms. If action isn't taken soon, when our young children reach retirement age, summer in Vermont will feel similar to northwest Georgia, with more than 17 days a year exceeding 95°F and rain storms will be more frequent and intense.

Climate change presents many risks for Vermont. Here's what we're facing:

- **More rain and flooding:** Precipitation will increase and become more frequent and intense, particularly in mountainous areas with an 80% increase in the likelihood of flooding threatening homes, infrastructure, communication and transportation systems.
- **Changes to agriculture:** An extended growing season may create more weeds and pests. Rising temperatures can also lead to heat-stress for livestock.
- **Different forests:** Ecosystems will be increasingly threatened by invasive species and shifts in the seasons.
- **Health concerns:** Respiratory conditions, heat-related illnesses, extreme weather-related injuries and tick and mosquito-borne diseases are projected to become more common.

Not everyone is impacted equally: Those without air conditioning, outdoor workers, the elderly, people with disabilities, low-income communities, Black/Indigenous/People of Color communities, rural communities without robust infrastructure, and people without housing are more at risk from climate impacts. The impacts of climate change will be felt intensely by those struggling with poverty and chronic health problems.

Future impacts of climate change are calculated based on the amount of carbon pollution we produce. The good news is that we can start to work together as a state to cut emissions to limit worsening impacts and to help prepare our communities for changes already being experienced.

What can be done to help Vermont thrive?

The Vermont Climate Action Plan is considering a range of approaches to address climate change equitably with attention on communities most impacted by climate change and an energy transition. At the core, one of the key strategies to cut pollution is to reduce fossil fuel consumption. The following draft strategies are intended to put the state on a path to reduce our collective carbon footprint, while also helping our communities adapt and be resilient in a warming world.

KEY FOCUS AREAS



1. Efficient transportation systems and vehicles

Providing Vermonters with more options to choose electric vehicles and increasing public transit choices including routes in rural communities that promote fewer passenger car trips and encourage smart growth.



4. Resilient working and natural lands

Increasing the resilience and health of agriculture and ecosystems including helping farmers cut climate pollution and support sustainable food systems.



2. Better buildings and homes

Enhancing the comfort, health and efficiency of our buildings by shifting to carbon-free energy for heating and cooling.



5. Strong rural communities

Building stronger, resilient and thriving rural communities including reduced fossil fuel use and increased access to safe, efficient and affordable housing, jobs and services.



3. Clean, reliable energy

Increasing access to clean, affordable and reliable energy such as wind and solar energy, for heating and transportation.



6. Low-carbon products and processes

Reducing climate pollution from wastewater treatment facilities, facilities with large refrigeration systems, and semiconductor manufacturing.